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EXCISE

82
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INFO OCT 01 EUR 17 NEA 13 CIAE 00 DODE 00 JPM 04 H 02 INR 07 NSAE 00
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R 041843Z SEP 69
FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4651
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BENGHAZI
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY FT LAMY
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
/USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
USCINCEUR
CINCUSAFE
RUTMSPA/COMSIXTHFLT
CINCUSNAVEUR

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 12 JUL 1982
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 TRIPOLI 2211

SUBJ: SOURCES OF THE LIBYAN COUP - PRELIMINARY VIEWS

1. THERE WILL BE MANY POST-MORTEMS ON OLD LIBYAN REGIME. MOST WILL REFLECT BENEFITS OF TWENTY-TWENTY HINDSIGHT, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO "INEVITABILITY" OF COUP TAKING PLACE, PROBABLY AT TIME OF KING'S DEMISE. TO EXTENT THEY POINT TO FAILURE OF MONARCHY AS BASIC REASON WHY REGIME COULD NOT SURVIVE WHEN CONFRONTED BY SKILLFULLY ORGANIZED, SHREWDLY-TIMED BLOW, THEY WILL BE CORRECT. JUSTIFICATION OF THIS ASSESSMENT IS TO BE FOUND IN TWO LONG-TERM CHARACTERISTICS SENUUSSI MONARCHY AND ONE

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WHICH HAS DEVELOPED ONLY WITHIN PAST TWO YEARS OR SO AND ON WHICH EMBASSY HAS REPORTED IN PAST.

2. FIRST LONG-TERM CHARACTERISTIC WAS FAILURE OF KING TO PERMIT DEVELOPMENT OF ANY PERMANENT POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS WHICH WOULD GIVE LIBYANS SENSE OF PARTICIPATION IN MANAGEMENT OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS. PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WERE POSTPONED OR CAREFULLY RIGGED, PRIME MINISTERS WERE RESPONSIBLE SOLELY TO KING AND WERE APPOINTED AND DISMISSED AT HIS WILL, POLITICAL PARTIES WERE BANNED, AND EXPRESSION OF PUBLIC OPINION EITHER SUPPRESSED OR CONTROLLED. RESULT WAS PATRIARCHAL POLITICAL SYSTEM HEADED BY ELDERLY KING WHO DID NOT TRUST HIS CHILDREN, THE LIBYAN PEOPLE. HOWEVER JUSTIED HE MAY HAVE BEEN IN NOT DOING SO, (WE WOULD BE THE LAST TO MAINTAIN LIBYANS ARE READY FOR FULL-BLOWN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM), THERE HAS BEEN ABUNDANT EVIDENCE OF DISSATISFACTION WITH HIS WAY OF GOVERNING, PARTICULARLY ON PART OF YOUNGER GENERATION UNIMPRESSED BY TRADITION AND GROWING UP IN LIBYAN SOCIETY TRANSFORMED BY OIL.

3. SECOND LONG-TERM CHARACTERISTIC OF MONARCHY FLOWED FROM FIRST: CONCENTRATION OF POLITICAL POWER IN KING MEANT MONARCH HAD TO BEAR RESPONSIBILITY FOR EVERY-THING THAT EITHER WENT WRONG IN COUNTRY OR THAT WAS NOT DONE AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN. AS EXAMPLE, DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF INTENSE DISSATISFACTION WITHIN MILITARY WITH COSTLY BRITISH MISSILE DEAL WHICH WAS ATTRIBUTED TO KING'S DESIRE TO HELP BRITISH FINANCIALLY RATHER THAN TO ROYAL CONCERN FOR ARMY'S GENUINE REQUIREMENTS.

4. MAJOR DECISIONS RE OIL CONCESSIONS, PARTICULARLY THOSE AFFECTING CHOICEST AREAS, IN 1969 AND 1967 WERE ATTRIBUTED TO KING OR TO THOSE IN POSITION TO INFLUENCE HIM. RUMORS AT ONE TIME SO WIDESPREAD THAT COURT HAD TO ISSUE STATEMENT DENYING THEM. CONTINUED US AND UK MILITARY PRESENCE IN COUNTRY ALSO ATTRIBUTED TO KING. MOST COMMON EXPRESSION IN COUNTRY WITH WHICH SUCCESSION OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH AMBASSADORS BECAME WEARILY FAMILIAR WAS THAT KING WOULD ACT ON THEIR ADVICE IF THEY WOULD ONLY GO TO HIM. KING CERTAINLY WAS ALMOST ALWAYS WILLING TO RECEIVE THEM. ON OTHER HAND HE ALSO RECEIVED VARIOUS NOTABLES OF COUNTRY

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AND SEEMED TO HAVE LISTENED TO THEM S WELL. B SIS FOR HIS DECISIONS ALWAYS REMAINED OBSCURE, EVEN TO HIS

MINISTERS. HE KEPT HIS OWN COUNSEL. EVEN HIS COMMUNICANTS RARELY KNEW WHEN THEY DEPARTED HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT THEY HAD MADE. ONLY THING CERTAIN IS THAT VIRTUALLY ALL HIS SOURCES OF INFORMATION WERE OLDER, ESTABLISHED MEMBERS LIBYAN SOCIETY. ONLY NOTABLE EXCEPTION OF WHICH WE AWARE WAS HIS EXPERIMENT WITH ABDUL HAMIID BAKKUUSH AS PRIME MINISTER, WHICH ENDED ABRUPTLY WITH LATTER'S DISMISSAL IN OCTOBER 1968. THUS, RESENTMENT AGAINST REGIME FOR ITS

ACTIONS OR OMISSIONS IN INTERNAL OR FOREIGN AFFAIRS INEVITABLY FOCUSED AGAINST KING HIMSELF, PARTICULARLY AMONG YOUNGER, ACTIVIST MEMBERS OF SOCIETY WHO WERE GIVEN NO REASON TO BELIEVE SITUATION WOULD BE BETTER UNDER CROWN PRINCE.

5. THIRD CHARACTERISTIC OF REGIME WHICH EMERGED MOST CLEARLY WITHIN PAST TWO YEARS WAS ITS CORRUPTION. DESPITE WHAT MAY BE SAID IN FUTURE, WE BELIEVE KING MUST BE GIVEN CREDIT FOR APPROVING POLICIES AIMED AT DISTRIBUTION COUNTRY'S VAST OIL WEALTH TO POPULACE. THIS POLICY WAS REFLECTED IN MAJOR PUBLIC HOUSING, SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AMD MASS EDUCATION PROGRAMS, DEVELOPMENT OF GENEROUS HEALTH AND WELFARE SERVICES AND IN DECISION TO MAINTAIN FREE ECONOMY IN WHICH LABOR WAS AT PREMIUM EVERYWHERE AND COULD PRETTY WELL GET WHAT IT WANTED IN WAGES AND BENEFITS. VERY REAL DOWNWARD FLOW OF BENEFITS, HOWEVER, COULD NOT AFFECT GROWING AWARENESS OF CORRUPTION

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USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES
USCINCEUR
CINCUSAFE
RUTMSPA/COMSIXTHFLT
CINCUSNAVEUR

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 TRIPOLI 22[illegible]

SUBJ: SOURCES OF THE LIBYAN COUP - PRELIMINARY VIEWS:

6. THERE HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY BEEN OTHER FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO DISSENSION IN LIBYAN COMMUNITY AND EMBASSY HAS IDENTIFIED THEM IN PAST. THESE INCLUDE: EMBARRASSMENT, FRUSTRATION, AND FEELING OF INFERIORITY AMONG YOUNGER ELEMENTS ARISING OUT OF NONROLE TRADITIONALLY PLAYED BY LIBYA IN ARAB AFFAIRS; GENERATION GAP WHICH MADE DIFFICULT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THOSE WHO REMEMBER PREINDEPENDENCE DAYS AND THOSE WHO MATURED AFTER 1951 AND MORE PARTICULARLY AFTER OIL; AND UNHAPPINESS OVER "FOREIGN INFLUENCE" IN

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COUNTRY REPRESENTED BY MILITARY BASES AND FOREIGN-DOMINATED ECONOMY. PROBABLY ALL THESE FACTORS PLAYED SOME PART IN THINKING OF THE YOUNG OFFICERS WHO SEEM TO HAVE PULLED OFF THIS COUP SO SUCCESSFULLY THIS FAR.

7. FOR THE MOMENT, THE DOMINANT CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW REGIME ARE ITS REPUBLICAN, ANTICORRUPTION, AND ARAB ASPECTS. WHAT THESE WILL MEAN IN PRACTICE, OTHER THAN ABOLITION OF MONARCHY, IT IS TOO SOON TO SAY. IT IS USUALLY EASIER TO TAKE OVER A GOVERNMENT THAN IT IS TO GOVERN, AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW REGIME WILL EMERGE AS IT SEEKS SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS. WE ARE MINDFUL, HOWEVER, THAT MILITARY COUPS IN ARAB WORLD ARE TRADITIONALLY LEFTISTS. NATIONALIST, AND XENOPHOBIC. ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY MODERATE ELEMENTS ARE USUALLY REPRESENTED IN THEM AT OUTSET, IN TIME THEY ARE ELIMINATED BY RADICALS. AGAIN, ONLY TIME WILL TELL WHETHER PATTERN WILL BE REPEATED HERE. WE MAY KNOW BETTER WHEN LEADERSHIP SURFACES.

8. WHY AND HOW THESE FORCES COALESCED AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME CAN ONLY BE GUESSED. CERTAINLY, THE KING'S PROLONGED ABSENCE ABOARD WAS A FACTOR. IT REMOVED FROM THE SCENE THE SOLE FIGURE AROUND WHOM THE TRADITIONAL ELEMENTS COULD UNITE AND HAS RELIEVED THE LEADERS OF THE COUP OF THE AWKWARD PROBLEM THEY WOULD FACE OF DISPOSING OF THE KING WERE HE IN LIBYA. RUMORS OF HIS INTENTION TO ABDICATE, WHICH WERE CURRENT IMMEDIATELY BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, MAY HAVE ENCOURAGED PLOTTERS TO MAKE THEIR MOVE FAST LEST INITIATIVE BE LOST TO OTHERS TO TAKE OVER IF KING SUDDENLY STEPPED DOWN.

9. DISTINGUISHED AMERICAN HISTORIAN ONCE WROTE THAT IT IS EASIER TO SAY WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE WHEN ONE KNOWS HOW THE STORY TURNED OUT. IN THE CASE OF THE SENUSSI MONARCHY AND KING IN PARTICULAR, THIS IS NOT-RPT-NOT- TRUE. KING UNDOUBTEDLY ACTED FOR WHAT HE BELIEVED TO BE LIBYA'S BEST INTEREST OUT OF HIS OWN TESTED EXPERIENCE. FOR YEARS, IT WORKED, AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE, GIVEN HIS BACKGROUND AND CHARACTER, HOW HE COULD HAVE ACTED OTHERWISE. UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, AND BASED ON THE EVIDENCE THUS FAR, MANY LIBYANS APPARENTLY BELIEVED HIS EXPERIENCE AND BACKGROUND HAD BECOME INCREASINGLY IRRELEVANT AS HIS COUNTRY

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ITS ECONOMY AND HIS PEOPLE CHANGED WITH THE TIMES

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